



FOR COUNTRY WESTERN DANCE
 P.O. BOX 17217
 URBANA, IL 61803-7217

September-October 2014 NEWSLETTER

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Manual Volume I

The 2014 revised NTA Manual Volume I is ready for sale. Please check page 21 for information on ordering.

The prices (USA, Canada, and Foreign) are the same whether ordering by PayPal on the NTA Web site or by check (Canadian and Foreign checks must be written on a USA bank in USD). The prices include postage and handling.

The first portion of the manual contains material for all types of dance—line, partner, and couples. The second part is geared toward School Figures levels one and two.

You will like the many illustrations and there are lots of hints and suggestions on teaching and dance. The dance position illustrations are especially helpful for good posturing and couple alignment.

We have spent considerable time and effort on the manual and hope it will meet with your approval. It has been proof read by several people, but you cannot pick up any publication or newspaper or book that you won't find some errors. We hope we have only missed a few and would appreciate your letting us know if you find one.

2014 Election Results

The positions of Membership Director, Promotions & Advertising, and Treasurer were uncontested. Carol Schwartz will remain the NTA Treasurer for three (3) more years.

Reminder

Did you take Dance Fundamentals V in 2010 or 2011? If you did you need to either retake Dance Fundamentals V or attend the C.A.P. Workshop in 2014 to keep your eligibility.

If you took the C.A.P. Exam, you are grandfathered in and are safely within the eligibility time limit.

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

This newsletter is published bimonthly. Any changes of address should be sent to the NTA Business Office. Second copies will not be sent and extra copies may not be available following the initial mailing.

All statements included herein are those of the person submitting the information unless clearly identified as official guidelines or policies of the NTA. Distribution of photocopies of parts or all of the newsletter is permitted, except previously copyrighted material when noted. All information for inclusion must be received by the editor at least 60 days prior to the month of requested publication. Articles must contain the typed name, address, and signature of the person submitting the information. Please include both a day and evening telephone number so we can contact you if necessary.

The Editor reserves the right to delete any material judged to be inappropriate due to use of language, or felt to be detrimental to any individual or organization.

SEND NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS TO:

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MEMBERSHIPS run one year from the month they are processed. New memberships and renewals are accepted at any time during

the year. See Membership form below. USA members can purchase ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC licenses which are for teaching only and do not cover other areas where music is used.

RENEWALS AND CHANGES OF ADDRESS—The label on this Newsletter shows your membership expiration date. Renewal notices are sent two months prior to membership expiration. Once you renew you will receive a new membership card. Please check your cards and immediately notify the business office if there are any errors.

ADVERTISING RATES		Member 1 issue	Non- member 1 issue
Publication of advertising in this Newsletter does not constitute endorsement or guarantee of goods and services by the Association or its elected officers.	1/2 page	70.00	95.00
	Full page	100.00	125.00



Membership Application and Renewal Form

Please PRINT clearly!

Last name: _____ First name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Country: _____

Phone #: _____ Work #: _____

E-mail: _____ Cell #: _____

Membership type: New Renewal (Member #: _____) Junior Membership (check only if under 21)

1 Year—\$35.00 2 Years—\$60.00 3 Years—\$75.00

Because there are no joint memberships, please enclose a separate form for each individual applying for a new membership or renewal. **NTA does not license or certify teachers.**

Make check payable to NTA and mail to **NTA, P.O. Box 17217, Urbana, IL 61803-7217**. Membership fees can not be paid by checks drawn on banks outside the United States unless payable through a U.S. bank. Money orders are acceptable if payable in U.S. funds.

As soon as your membership has been processed, you will receive your Membership Card and New Member Welcome (which includes ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC applications for U.S. members only).

The NTA Accreditation Program is a form of certification that gives the teachers goals to work toward to further their education in dance and dance teaching using the rating system. Everyone is encouraged to go through the Program.

TO USE PAYPAL for NEW and RENEWING MEMBERSHIPS go to www.ntadance.com
(includes PayPal charges): \$37.00 USD for 1 Year, \$63.00 USD for 2 Years, \$78.50 USD for 3 Years.

Teacher Training Workshop Schedule

August 8-10, 2014

Dancin' Up A Storm Benefit, Kansas City, MO
www.dancinupastorm.com

August 23, 2014

Motion Workshop Following NTA Guidelines
Gasthaus
Kassel, Germany
Iris Funkler: ntagermany@aol.com

September 13-14, 2014

NTA Workshop and Testing
VPLEX, Villa Rica, GA
Debra Cleckler: debb@cleckler.com

September 13-14, 2014

Workshop Weekend
Dance Fundamentals 1 through 5
Patrice Chollet • Billy-Berclau (62)
Web site : <http://ntafs.fr/event/14-15-sep-2014-billy-berclau-62-examens-formation-nta>

September 14, 2014

NTA Accreditation Dance Fundamentals I
Workshop & Testing
Lawrence Community Building, Lawrence, KS
www.lawrenceks.org/lprd/index.php Mike Salerno:
KSDanceguy@aol.com

September 27, 2014

Motion Workshop Following NTA Guidelines
Sportshall
Dresden, Germany
René Menger: Virginia-Dancers@gmx.de

September 28, 2014

Workshop Only
Dance Fundamentals 1, 2, and 5
Location to be announced
Marie-France Simon: mfbts@sfr.fr

October 1-2, 2014

Testing—all levels
Location to be announced
Marie-France Simon: mfbts@sfr.fr

October 3, 2014

Choreographie & Dance Fundamentals V Material
Achalm Squash Center
Pfullingen, Germany
Iris Funkler: ntagermany@aol.com

October 4, 2014

Music & More
Plus Dance Fundamental V Material
Achalm Squash Center
Pfullingen, Germany
Iris Funkler: ntagermany@aol.com

October 5, 2014

NTA Accreditation Dance Fundamentals II
Workshop & Testing
Lawrence Community Building, Lawrence, KS
www.lawrenceks.org/lprd/index.php
Mike Salerno: KSDanceguy@aol.com

November 9, 2014

NTA Accreditation Dance Fundamentals III
Workshop & Testing
Lawrence Community Building, Lawrence, KS
www.lawrenceks.org/lprd/index.php
Mike Salerno: KSDanceguy@aol.com

November 14-16, 2014

Workshop & Testing Weekend
Dance Fundamentals I, II, III, IV, V
Achalm Squash Center
Pfullingen, Germany
Iris Funkler: ntagermany@aol.com

November 15-16, 2014

NTA Workshop and Testing
VPLEX, Villa Rica, GA
Debra Cleckler: debb@cleckler.com

December 29, 2014-January 4, 2015

Worlds Championships 2015
Disney's Coronado Spring Resort, Orlando, Florida
Randy Shots: rshotts@comcast.net
Kelly Gellette: ntadance@embarqmail.com

February 13-15, 2015

NTA Dance Camp
Kansas City, MO
Karen Hedges: khedges111@hotmail.com
See pages 10 & 11 of this newsletter
for the Ad and Registration Form

THE NTA MISSION STATEMENT

The National Teacher's Association for Country Western Dance (NTA) is a nonprofit, international dance education organization intent on improving the quality of dance and dance instruction. It is made up of volunteers who support and promote dance education and social dance. The NTA provides workshops and publications focusing on standard dance terminology and up-to-date technique and styling. Recognizing the influence of many dance forms, NTA maintains a solid foundation of core knowledge as dance evolves.

Fitting Dances to Dancers' Skills (Part 3)

by Patrice Chollet, NTA Zone EU/CON/S Director

In the two preceding articles of this series (page 16 May-June 2014 and page 6 July-August 2014), I focused on the dance skills that dancers need to master in order to perform and progress on the dance floor. Then I described the set of competencies that dancers need to demonstrate at five levels of experience: ultra-beginners, beginners, novices, intermediates and advanced.

Now, I'd like to present a tool that I've been using and refining for a couple of years to help classify dances according to the skill level of dancers. When selecting dances for my various classes, I always ask myself the question: is this dance suited to that group? Is it not too difficult? For most dances, a quick review of the dance gives the answer readily, but for a few, the indications of the choreographer are somewhat misleading, especially if the dance seems to be at the border of two levels.

How to use the evaluation tool?

The way this tool works is to record all the elements of difficulty of a specific dance and assign them points and then to add up all the points in order to come up with an overall score for the dance. This overall score is then compared to a reference grid that gives the dance level, i.e. which level of dancers the dance fits.

Each skill set is examined in turn, starting with the figures and movements.

One has only to read the choreography and count the number of figures of level 2, 3 and 4. In order to know which level a figure is, a reference table can be found at <http://ntafs.fr/en/eval> (this table could not be reproduced

here, as it is rather comprehensive with 200 figures or so). Note that level 1 figures are overlooked, as they are deemed not to add any specific difficulty.

We then count the number of body rotations (with a unit expressed in quarter turns) and, separately, the number of direction reversals (a reversal is counted if at a point in the choreography, there is a turn to one direction - say to the left, and further down, the next turn is to the other direction - in this case, to the right).

The third section examines the length of the choreography and the number of walls. A 32-count (in 4/4 time, 24-count in 3/4 time) and 4-wall choreography does not add nor subtract any point. For each additional section of 8 counts (in 4/4 time, 6 counts in 3/4 time), add 0.5 point. Conversely, points are taken away for shorter choreographies as well as for 1-wall and 2-wall dances. Irregularities such as Tags, Restarts, Funnel and Phrasing add one point each.

The fourth section is about the Tempo of the music. Each rhythm has specific ranges of tempos that qualifies as being slow, medium, fast or very fast. A reference table is provided at the link mentioned above. Also, one point is added in the case of a dance whose start is difficult to identify.

In the fifth section, elements of styling are taken into consideration. Some rhythms, such as Cuban, WCS, Night Club and Waltz qualify for added points. In addition, some music is more difficult to follow due to subdued or lack of percussion: points may be added to account for this occurrence.

Lastly, the type of dance is examined, with added points if the dance is a contra, a partner or a mixer dance.

Dance Name	Counts:	SIMPLE - PHRASED	
	Walls:	Type: LINE – PARTNER - MIXER	
	Rhythm:	BPM:	
Music Structure	<i>The Counts include Tags, sum of all parts if phrased</i>	A	B
		ADDED POINTS	SUBTRACTED POINTS

FIGURES AND MOVEMENTS		(*)	
Number of level 2 figures – add 1 per figure			
Number of level 3 figures multiplied by 2 – add 2 per figure			
Number of level 4 figures multiplied by 3 – add 3 per figure			
Number of syncopated steps divided by 2 (<i>add 0.5 per step not counted above</i>)			
Number of HOLDS divided by 2 – add 0.5 per HOLD			
Number of figures with arms movements (<i>add 0.5 per hand clapping or finger snapping, 1 per other mvt</i>)			
TURNS AND ORIENTATION			
Number of direction changes (body rotation) - add 0.5 per quarter turn			
Number of direction reversals - add 1 per reversal			
CHOREOGRAPHY STRUCTURE			
Divide Counts by 8, subtract 4 and divide the result by 2			
1-Wall dance: subtract 1 - 2-Wall dance: subtract 0.5			
Subtract 0.5 per each repeated section (**)			
Phrased: add number of parts minus 1			
Total number of Tags + Restarts + Funnels (<i>a funnel is skipping a section of the dance</i>)			
TEMPO			
SLOW: subtract 1 - FAST: add 1 - VERY FAST: add 2			
Dance start is difficult to identify : add 1			
STYLING			
Cuban, WCS and Night Club : add 1 – Waltz : add 2			
Beats are difficult to perceive : add 1 or 2 depending on perceived difficulty			
DANCE TYPE			
Contra: subtract 0.5 – Partner: add 1 – Mixer: add 2			

	Total (A – B)	Total A	Total B
TOTAL POINTS :			

(*) Use the left-side column to count the elements of each category and the right-side column to add up the counts.

(**) A section is repeated if it appears twice (or more) in the step sheet. A section that is the mirror image of another section is not considered as repeated. The counts and figures of that section are none the less accounted for evaluation.

Assigning a level

The overall score is now compared to the ranges of points in the following table:

Dance level	From	To
Ultra-beginners	0	4
Beginners	5	8
Beginners Plus	9	11
Novices	12	18
Novices Plus	19	21
Intermediates	22	28
Intermediates Plus	29	31
Advanced	➤ 31	

I have been using this tool over more than 300 dances. It has been a great help for me to decide whether a dance was fit to be taught to a group level I had in mind. It is also very useful as an instrument to compare dances as it places all dances along the same objective scale.

The reference tables, and in particular the list of figures and levels could be used as a starting point to address the issue raised by Mike Salerno in his article "That Dance Is WHAT Level" in the Nov-Dec 2013 issue of the NTA Newsletter. I'd be pleased to contribute to that effort of his. In the meantime, I hope to have brought some clarification as to what makes a dance more or less difficult and fit to the skill set of various levels of dancers.

What is Swing Dancing

by Roger Weiss

Reprinted with permission 4/16/2014

Submitted by Karen Hedges, NTA Vice President of Events & Website

There seems to be a lot of controversy over what swing dancing is. I don't believe in getting all caught up in the semantics of what each style has to be called, it's just not that important to me. But, for new people (and some experienced ones I know), I'd like to offer my perspective on the different swing dance terms being tossed around. Swing Dancing is a general term which at the very least, means dancing to swing music. Swing music can be from the swing era (thirties-forties) all the way to current day. The main characteristic of swing music is that it swings. How can you tell if a song swings? Tough question. Some things can't be put into words, it's all in the feel. All I know is, when the music's swinging, I can't stand still!

There are several types of dances that can be done to swing music.

Lindy (a.k.a. Lindy Hop) – started in the late 1920's in Harlem, NY. This is the original style (derived from The Charleston) that spawned all the others. It's characterized by an eight-count basic step (the Swing-out), and consists of eight and six count steps. There are many styles of Lindy, however, I think that they can all be broken down into two categories; Performance and Social (or street dancing). The first can be seen in the old film clips from the 1930's dance contests. It often consists of aerial steps and all configurations of Charleston kicks performed at fast tempos. The social style is a smooth, lead-follow dance done at all dance tempos. Lindy (performance style) is what is currently being seen in the Gap commercials.

East Coast Swing (a.k.a. Jitterbug) – The first time I heard the term "East Coast Swing" was when I lived in San Francisco, and they seemed to use it to differentiate it from West Coast Swing. Whatever, this is the 6-count variant that came

out of the original Lindy style in the 1950's. The eight-count steps were pretty much dropped, and the 6-count steps kept, and it bounced more to fit to the fifties rock and roll music.

Jitterbug- this term was coined (by Cab Calloway, I believe) in the 1930's, so initially referred to Lindy dancers. But, somehow, it's now used to refer to East Coast Swing.

Balboa – This is sometimes called cartoon dancing, because its done to very fast music (over 200 beats per minute). The feet move quickly while the upper body stays pretty still. The dance was started in California in the 1930's (I think). Jonathan Bixby and Sylvia Sykes are the leading teachers of this style and are great to watch.

Retro Swing – I have no idea what this means, but it sure is popular. I've been told it refers to a style of music, not dance. Go figure!

West Coast "Swing" – When it was first danced (1940's thru 1980's), it was danced to swing music. However, nowadays, it's danced to R&B, Hustle and Disco, so I no longer list it in the swing dance category, since this contradicts my basic definition of swing dancing (see above).

Carolina Shag – I like the look of this dance. It started along the beaches in the Carolinas, but, since it's not done to swing music, I've got to eliminate this one too.

St. Louis Shag – Very bouncy and kicky dance done mainly to 50s rock and roll music.

Jive – The ballroom competition style of swing dance. Very bouncy and erect. I think the term came from England.

If you can think of any other swing dances, please fill me in, as I'm not the final authority on this by any means.

Hard to Admit!

It seems that one of the hardest things to do in teaching is to admit that the way we have always done things may not be the best way and to change the way we teach, but in following the NTA Terminology Booklet and adopting the standard patterns and terminology recommended by NTA I have done just that.

There are a number of teachers who do not teach the way I do, and I don't teach the way I did, so when I begin a class I always warn the students if they have been in someone else's classes or if they've been in my classes before they might hear some things different than what they learned before.

Then I explain about NTA and the effort to standardize country western dance, being careful to explain that what I and others may have taught them before is not wrong but might not be current.

The students then are not reluctant to learn something new and seem to appreciate being given the opportunity to learn how country western dancers are dancing in other areas of the country.

Try it . . . you might be surprised at how well you will be received.

The Learning Process

by Mary Walker, NTA Zone P Director

The idea of individualized learning styles originated in the 1970's and continues to influence education. The core concept is that individuals differ in how they learn. A great deal of research has been done in support of this concept. Knowing this, how do you change your teaching to be more effective?

A good starting point is accepting the fact that learning is something you do, not something that is done to you. There are many ways to learn without the intervention of teaching. As teachers our role should be to facilitate the learning process.

Sensory preferences influence the ways a student learns. Visual learners like to see a picture. A demo of the dance is particularly meaningful. It also helps to demo the steps in each segment of the dance.

Tactile or kinesthetic learners like to experience information. They watch the demo but don't get it until they have done it themselves. Repetition of doing each segment is more meaningful for them.

And auditory learners listen to the rhythms in the music and the step descriptions. They respond well to the "counts."

Learning styles reflect learning behaviors. We can recognize the learning style of an individual student by observing his or her behavior. By observing a student's response you can determine their learning style. Therefore, you need to make sure your teaching addresses all sensory preferences.

Another component to learning is social. There are four parts to social learning:

- **Attention**

In order to learn you need to be paying attention. Anything that detracts your attention will have a negative effect on observational learning.

- **Retention**

The ability to store information is also an important part of the learning process. This is particularly evident when

teaching beginners. They are learning steps as well as dance patterns. After a couple of dances you can almost see when they have reached their retention limit.

- **Reproduction**

Once a dance has been learned and retained you need to be able to perform the behavior you observed.

- **Motivation**

In order for learning to be successful, you have to be motivated.

The social component is more about modeling the behavior you want learned rather than teaching method.

As teachers we should take as many classes as possible to experience what other teachers do. Pay particular attention to what works and what is problematic. I recently taught an intermediate level contra line dance. As usual, I taught it as a line dance first. We performed it to the music and everyone did well. When we lined up to do it contra, almost half the class fell apart. I couldn't understand why. As it turns out, when I told them to line up contra I changed their orientation. Instead of having the first row turn around and face the second, I thought we would have more room if they lined up the length of the room instead of across it. Not only did they have someone across from them doing the opposite steps, but the orientation of their steps changed! I didn't have a problem with the change so it never occurred to me that it would make a difference. After several minutes of confusion, one of my students asked if we could try it the same way we learned it as a line dance. Immediate clarification – amazing! She was a special education teacher and know orientation could impact learning. I learned two important things that day. Orientation impacts learning and take all the help you can get.

Teachers Helping Teachers

Teachers Helping Teachers is the motto of the NTA. The best way teachers can help teachers is by using the standardized terminology, dance definitions, and basic dance positions the NTA has provided for the country western dance community.

Why Do We Need Standardization?

Standardization establishes communication among country western dance instructors to develop and maintain high standards. It develops uniform guidelines for everyone to use. Standardization in general is never an easy task, but there must be a beginning, a starting point on which to build, the Terminology Committee defined a base, NTA members

voted to adopt the terms and definitions and agreed to start using them. Nothing is cast in stone. Agreement on specific terms is not 100%, but people consented to give it a try. IT IS WORKING!

It would be a real treat to look over a line dance step description and see a three step turn listed instead of it being called a turning vine. Or a shoulder shrug (a shimmy) not being called a boogie (which is a leg and hip movement).

The Accreditation (teaching training) Program workshops have been a tremendous help in changing the way terms and definitions are being used. THANK YOU NTA!

Chair Stretching for Line Dancers

by Helen Woods, NTA State Director for Alabama

Line Dancing is exercise. It is good to stretch after exercise while the muscles are warm. This is the best time to work on flexibility. Stretching also lowers the risk of injury and feels good to a person who has been exercising for a long time.

So, why do line dancers leave out this important component to their fitness routine? One reason might be that it is inconvenient to get a floor mat and lie on the floor and do a stretch routine after line dancing. But, what if you could do a stretch routine in the chair that you are going to use to change out of your dance shoes?

The routine below is a chair stretch routine that would take a few minutes of your time and would reap many benefits in increased flexibility, less sore muscles, and decreased rate of injury. And, the simple fact is: it feels good to stretch after a long session of dancing. The routine below includes a stretch for most of the muscles that we use while dancing.

1. Sitting on the front edge of a chair, bring your knee toward your chest and hold it there by clasping your fingers under your thigh while you rotate your ankles in one direction and then the other. Repeat for the other side. Then, bring your knee toward your chest and point and flex your foot, feeling your calf stretch as you flex your foot. Repeat for the other side.
2. Place one foot on the floor and extend the other leg with heel on floor. Keeping your back straight, hinge from your hips and reach toward your toes. Feel the stretch in the back of your thigh, your hamstring muscles. If you can reach your toes, pull your toes up toward your head so that you can feel a stretch in your calf. Repeat for the other side.
3. Sitting toward one side of the chair, place the toe (of the leg closest to the edge) on the floor and aim your knee toward the floor. You should feel a stretch in the top of your thigh, your quadriceps. Repeat for the other side.
4. Sitting in the chair, place one ankle on your other thigh and allow your knee to drop to the side. Your legs will look a bit like a number 4. You should feel stretching in your outer thigh and hip area, the abductors. Repeat for the other side.
5. Sitting on the edge of the chair, open your feet wide apart, place one hand on each thigh and press open. Lean your upper body slightly forward. You should feel a stretch in your inner thigh, the adductors.
6. Sitting on the edge of the chair, arch your back like a cat and pull your abdominal muscles in and up toward your spine. Then straighten your spine and feel the stretch in your lower back. In yoga, this stretch is called Cat/Cow.
7. Placing one hand on your opposite knee, turn your body looking over your turned shoulder and place the other arm on the back of the chair for a Spinal Twist. Repeat for the other side.
8. Take one arm across the front of your body and hold with the other hand for a shoulder stretch.
9. Place both hands behind you and grab the chair. Lean forward and stretch your chest muscles, pectorals.
10. Roll shoulders forward and up toward ears and then back and down. Inhale as you roll the shoulders up and exhale as you roll the shoulders down.
11. Drop the chin down toward your chest and bring it back to neutral. Pulling your shoulders down and back, drop your ear toward one shoulder and hold. Repeat to the other side. Gently roll your neck from one side to the front and then to the other side. Repeat going the other direction.
12. Raising the arms to the side and overhead, inhale and as you exhale lower your arms. Repeat for several deep breaths.

Remember to hold each stretch for about 30 seconds and breathe while you stretch. Go only to the point of slight discomfort, not pain. Adding this chair routine at the end of your line dancing session will improve flexibility and add a much needed component to your exercise routine.

Getting a Grip

Why do toes and fingers wrinkle after being in water, while other body parts don't? For better gripping.

When our digits get waterlogged, our nervous system constricts tiny blood vessels under the skin, creating that puckered, pruney look. In a recent test, researchers found

this physical reaction enabled subjects to more easily pick up small, slick items such as wet marbles. The scientists suggest this trait evolved to help us walk and handle objects better in wet condition.

A History of Line Dancing

by Rick Bowen, Pine Grove, CA
from the Western Square Dancing Web page
submitted by Betty Moses, NTA State Director for Colorado

Line Dances began sometime around BC. As far as I have been able to determine from research, line dancing in one form or another has been around since recorded time.

What we do today evolved from the old "Contra" dances that were very popular in the New England States from the early 1800s. Contra style dances are still popular but in a slightly different form. In the 1800s two lines would form, men on one side, women on the other. The partners would join between the two lines and generally do their own routine down the middle. When they reached the end of the lines, they parted and moved back into their respective lines and the next couple would begin. The "Stroll" from back in the 1940s is a good example of this style of dance. If you saw the movie "Grease," you saw the "Stroll" being done by John Travolta.

In the 1970s, the form of Line Dance we do today was born. I have no data on specific dates but, when I first got into "Country Western" style dance, there weren't that many line dances being done. I was told that "Four Corners" was the second oldest line dance of this style but, no one could ever tell me what was the oldest. That is hearsay because I've never been able to find anything in writing to back it up. I have books written by a man who was born in the early 1800s and who gave what I consider to be fairly accurate information on the concept of line dancing. That's where I got most of my information. [Rick did not give me this man's name or any other info. on him].

The "J.R. Hustle" dating back to 1980 & "The Traveling Four Corners" were choreographed by a gal from Texas by the name of Jimmie Ruth White. The Traveling Four Corners is (in its original form), a quad dance (square) but choreographed in the general concept of the Line Dance.

I've seen some very old film dating back to the beginning of moving pictures and some even older photos of African tribes in line dance formation doing step combinations not

that far removed from what we do today. There were similar dances done by the American Indian. I realize that most people, when they think of Indian dances, visualize circles around a fire but, many dances were done in lines, moving left & right in a step, close, step, close series of moves

Until recently, the most common move in line dances was the basic Schottische; step, cross, step, lift (or scoot). This, followed by the Polka and the Cha Cha, both of which play a very large part in the composition of the Line Dance. More recently, still, syncopation's of the style normally found in WCS have made a large imprint on the Line Dance choreography.

Looking back at some of the earlier line dances, having the correct number of steps, utilizing the correct number of musical beats, didn't seem all that important. The J. R. Hustle mentioned earlier, was the only dance for a very long time that actually followed the concept of phrasing to the musical major (32 beats).

Chorus lines, which have been around for a very long time, are not that different in concept when compared with line dances we do today. So, as I said, Line Dancing, in one form or another, has been around for a very long time.

A longtime friend of mine, the first I know of to teach CW dance in the public school system, gave me step-descriptions from the 1970s. Back in the 70's & early 80's, teachers from all over the country would get together in what they called "Dance Caravans" similar to the "Dance Camps" that you see today except it was for teachers only. They exchanged dances, ideas and general information on how to improve on what they were doing. Most of these people were professionals who owned their own studios and generally taught in several areas of dance, not just CW. Specifics on Line Dancing history is rare and trying to nail down exact dates is impossible.

Cross Steps

Cross steps are generally danced to the side in 3rd or 5th position to any rhythms. Care should be taken to keep the shoulders parallel. If the body is turned too far with the cross steps, the steps become forward or backward steps and are hard to lead and follow, as well do not look comfortable.

Cross steps are made by crossing the free foot either in front or behind the supporting foot in 3rd or 5th foot position.

When partners cross their feet both forward and backward at the same time in the same direction (requiring a semi open and reverse position) the step is sometimes referred to as a junior cross. If they cross opposite to one another (requiring

a left side [parallel] and a right side [parallel] position) the step is sometimes referred to as a senior cross

Cross steps are led with the fingers and the heel of the man's right hand accompanied with a body lead. For example:

1. to allow the lady to cross her right foot *behind* her left foot, the man leads with the heel of his right hand and leans to the right;
2. to allow the lady to cross her right foot *in front* of her left foot, the man leads with the fingers of his right hand and leans to the right.

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Using the Body (Part 1)

by Marti Prades, NTA Country Director for Spain & Andorra

The elements of dance are part of the foundational concepts that dancers understand and practice, and they provide a way of framing and talking about movement in any type of dance. While different dance styles call for specialized skills and stylization choices, the underlying elements of dance—body, action, space, time, and energy—are visible in all dance experiences.

But, What is Dance?

That's a big question! Here's an answer that's short and sweet: Dance is an art form that uses movement to communicate our ideas, feelings, and experiences.

But how?

The Five Elements of Dance

- Body
- Action
- Space
- Time
- Energy

These five elements are inter-connected; at times it's hard to separate one from the other. But as we discuss each one, we'll include specific vocabulary used to talk about dance and examine how each element can be manipulated to create different results.

Who Dances? The Dancer

Imagine a body moving with rhythmic steps and motions, usually performing to music. That's dance. Sounds simple, right? Dance critic Walter Terry put it best this way:

"No paints nor brushes, marbles nor chisels, pianos or violins are needed to make this art, for we are the stuff that dance is made of. It is born in our body, exists in our body and dies in our body. Dance, then, is the most personal of all the arts . . . it springs from the very breath of life."

The human body is what others see when they look at dance. Sometimes the body is still; other times it may be in motion. A dancer can use the whole body, or emphasize individual body parts, when moving.

When you watch dance, try to notice the position of the body. Is it symmetrical, with the right and left sides doing the same thing, or not? What shape is the body making? Are the shapes sharp and angular, or soft and rounded? Is the body curved, twisted, or straight?

Just as some colors in a painting may be more vibrant than others, you may notice dancers who have exceptional body control. They have worked hard to train their bodies (essentially their instrument of expression) to achieve superior balance, strength, and agility. Pay extra attention to how dancers use their breath when working through a dance phrase, or series of movements.

Dancers use their bodies to take internal ideas, emotions, and intentions and express them in an outward manner, sharing them with others. Dance can communicate this internal world, or it can be abstract, focusing on shapes and patterns.

The Dancer Does What? Moves!

Action is any human movement involved in the act of dancing. What do dancers do? They move—this is the action they perform. Movement can be divided into two general categories:

- **Non-locomotor or axial movement:** Any movement that occurs in one spot including a bend, stretch, swing, rise, fall, shake, turn, rock, tip, suspend, and twist
- **Locomotor movement:** Any movement that travels through space including a run, jump, walk, slide, hop, skip, somersault, leap, crawl, gallop, and roll.

Action includes small movements like facial expressions or gestures, as well as larger movements like lifts, carries, or catches done with a partner or in a group. "Action" is also considered the movement executed as the pauses or stillness between movements.

Dancers work together with a choreographer to practice and refine the action of the dance. When the action has been "set," or finalized, the dancers must memorize their movement sequences in order to be able to perform them.

Where Does the Dancer Move? Through Space

We're not talking about the final frontier here! We're talking about where the action of dance takes place. Dance moves through space in an endless variety of ways.

To better explain, here are some ways a choreographer or dancer thinks about space:

- **Level:** Is the movement on the floor, or reaching upward? Are they performed high, medium, or low?
- **Direction:** Does the movement go forward, backward, sideways, right, left, or on a diagonal?
- **Place:** Is the movement done on the spot (personal space), or does it move through space (general space, downstage, upstage)?
- **Orientation:** Which way are the dancers facing?
- **Pathway:** Is the path through space made by the dancers curved, straight, or zigzagged? Or is it random?
- **Size:** Does the movement take up a small, narrow space, or a big, wide space?
- **Relationships:** How are the dancers positioned in space in relationship to one another? Are they close together or far apart? Are they in front of, beside, behind, over, under, alone, or connected to one another?

The list helps us understand how to think about movement through space. Imagine how many ways you could perform a simple movement, like clapping your hands if you ran it through the different concepts listed above. Remember, space can be both indoors and outdoors, and some dances are created with specific spaces in mind.

How Does the Body Move in Relation to Time?

Choreographers have to make decisions about timing. Are their movements quick or slow? Are certain steps repeated in different speeds during the work? If so, why? We can think of time in the following ways:

- **Clock Time:** We use clock time to think about the length of a dance or parts of a dance measured in seconds, minutes, or hours.
- **Timing Relationships:** When dancers move in relation to each other (before, after, together, sooner than, faster than).
- **Metered time:** A repeated rhythmic pattern often used in music (like 2/4 time or 4/4 time). If dances are done to music, the movement can respond to the beat of the music or can move against it. The speed of the rhythmic pattern is called its tempo.
- **Free Rhythm:** A rhythmic pattern is less predictable than metered time. Dancers may perform movement without using music, relying on cues from one another.

How? The Dancer Moves Through Space and Time With Energy

So now we have bodies moving through space and time. Isn't that enough? No quite. We need the fifth and last element of dance—energy.

Energy helps us to identify *how* the dancers move. What effort are they using? Perhaps their movements are sharp and strong, or maybe they are light and free. Energy also represents the quality of the movement—its power and richness. For choreographers and dancers, there are many possibilities.

The effort the dancers use can communicate meaning, depending on the energy involved. A touch between two dancers may be gentle and light, perhaps indicating concern or affection; or it may be sudden and forceful, indicating anger or playfulness. Energy is crucial in bringing the inner expression of emotion out to the stage performance.

Some ways to think about energy are:

- **Attack:** Is the movement sharp and sudden, or smooth and sustained?
- **Weight:** Does the movement show heaviness, as if giving into gravity, or is it light with a tendency upward?
- **Flow:** Does the movement seem restricted or bound, with a lot of muscle tension, or is it relaxed, free, and easy?
- **Quality:** Is the movement tight, flowing, loose, sharp, swinging, swaying, suspended, collapsed, or smooth?

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Learning to Walk Before Learning to Dance

by Anthony S. Natale, PhD

In teaching social dancing, many teachers overlook, or neglect, teaching the most fundamental basic which is so important later on when turning out fine-looking dancers. This basic skill is achieved by making sure students walk properly, since how they walk may well affect the way they dance.

If you were to observe and analyze how people walk, you would be amazed at the many different styles. Some people walk with their toes pointed out, some with their toes in; some step on the sides of their feet first, others take too long or short a step.

When one walks properly, the step is taken on the heel first and then transferred to the ball of the foot. Steps should be taken straight ahead with the feet passing very close by one another. In dancing this is called "follow-through" or "brushing." The length of the step should be in proper ratio to the person's height and length of leg so it produces a comfortable, smooth and good looking gait. The arms also

swing in proper proportion with the opposite arm, moving forward in sync with the opposite foot. In stepping backwards, the ball of the foot lands first, followed by the heel, plus the required brushing. The leg should be extended from the hip and not from the knee.

Students need to be made very conscious of the proper way to walk. A good teaching technique is to introduce forward/backward running steps, without a partner, using slow, slow, quick, quick timing. The length of each step should be equal, staying up on the quick steps and using heel/ball or ball/heel for the slow steps, depending on their direction. Knees should be neither too rigid or too excessively bent.

At first thought, dancers may not really appreciate how important walking is in relationship to dancing, and frequently do not realize how it affects their appearance. If you don't have a good walk, it can be acquired with a little bit of understanding and practice.

To Be Synchronic in Motion (Part 2)

by Annelies Gimpel, NTA Country Director for Germany (South)

Part 1 is on page 9 of the July-August 2014 newsletter.

II-Perception of the movement of the partner/ partners

The perception of the movement of the partner or the partner is syncing in the center of practice. It's about the spatial extent, ie the width and height of moving, the speed of the movement as a whole as well as individual sub-movements such as the arms to move rhythm and accentuation, as well as to the temporal precision. The visual perception plays a very important, if you can see the partner at all due to the preparation and formation. In this respect, we are still dependent for the motion adaptation on other senses, such as for listening to sounds, which are caused by the motion and by breathing, as well as the tactile sensation, which is accessed by physical contact or vibration of the base.

Exercises

- Foot: A small movement connection, observe closely and imitate
- Anticipatory See: join exercise of a partner and thereby anticipate certain movement actions
- Mirror Image Lichen Move
- Shadow Marquee
- Cover the same move (favorable with mirror control): Swing and arm circles while shifting sideways and circular wise

III-Perception of the room – the space available

There is a difference in the body's own room, so the room one with its own movement, passes through or occupies and in the "surrounding space" (ambient space) is the space that surrounds you.

When the body's own space you have, for example, assess properly learn how much space you occupy with a certain movement for yourself how strong one's own body is rounded, with as many or as big steps you can overcome a room.

So assume and maintain you find your way in the surrounding space travel routes and formations, is an essential

foundation for a synchronously running off the overall picture in group exercises. For this purpose, a well-pronounced spatial vision is required, especially peripheral vision must be practiced.

The visual perception must be directed to the formation, the location of one's body within the formation such as see exactly in a row behind the partner to choose the distances to the right partners, the directions of movement and the space ways.

Exercises

How much space does my movement need?

- Select a range for yourself that fits a particular combination, for example, horizontal swings in the frontal plane
- Set an appropriate distance with a partner, then jump the partners a stretching leap forward towards each other and are each other directly, without touching each other.

Endogenous space in relation to the surroundings

- At a certain distance - 4 hops, accommodate (small on short or long distance hops or long hops, 4 hops and three running steps at some point arrive exactly.

Travel routes and formations

For beginners area routes are, for example, Diagonal space formations such as Triangle initially very abstract. Insofar here guidance must be given, e.g. by markings on the floor, on a wall.

- Just go on the lines
- Change of direction by corner rounding
- Going to block formation, while the rows that meet the gaps exactly
- Go in two diagonals to the middle and at the meeting - threading, while maintaining pace and step size
- Go in the triangle and thereby regulate the distances at first with the help of a stick or a bar .

**Life may not always be the party we hoped for,
but while we are here we might as well dance.**

Get Your Beginners Ready for the Next Move

by Carol Schwartz, NTA Treasurer

There are many very good choreographers who are able to write line dances and partner dances that flow smoothly from one move to the next. These choreographers are able to put together the steps in such a way so that the momentum of one move leads seamlessly to the next and has the dancer's body in the correct position to perform the next move easily. However, this is not always the case. There may be some catchy rhythms that cause the dance writer to write the steps to that part of the music and this may cause a transition from one move to another that is not quite as smooth. Also, let's face it, some choreographers simply put favorite moves together to make a dance without taking into consideration the momentum needed to transition between moves easily.

Experienced dancers and dancers that are well versed in the dance, automatically know what is coming next and use the preceding step to move their bodies into the position needed to perform the next move with ease. However beginners do not understand this unless it is taught to them. They need to understand that their bodies must be in the correct position so that the momentum of one move leads them into the next with little effort.

Basically, they need to learn to use the center of their bodies and prep steps to put themselves into the correct position so that the transition between moves is smooth and easy.

Teach your beginners to use the end of the move before to set up the correct momentum to do the following move. Teach them to use the center of the body to moves the entire body into the correct direction. Teach them to use prep steps and contra-body motion to set up the next move so that smooth transitions are achieved.

Let's just look at some simple moves, such as a quarter turning left vine moving into a right jazz box. In order to get the right foot in the position to cross in front, to begin the jazz box, the body must be perfectly balanced by achieving a complete weight change with the body center over the base or weighted foot. That must be done at the end of the quarter turning vine. As the dancer turns on the ball of the foot on count 2 3 of the vine, the beginner should be taught to use the center of the body to achieve that quarter turn and the complete weight change needed for balance by count 3, so that the right foot is in the proper position to start the jazz box. If the dancer is still completing the quarter turn on count 4, it is too late to make a smooth transition into a jazz box.

Sometimes the last step of a triple step must be used as a prep step to smoothly transition into a next move. If you are teaching a cross rock and triple step sequence, the last step of the triple step should put the body in the correct position to achieve the cross rock. For this we use both a prep step into fifth position on the last step of the side triple step together with a slight diagonal turn of the center of the body.

There are many turns in Patterned Partner dances that are awkward because of the fact that many times the partners are on different feet so what might be an easy turn for one is not for the partner. However, use the same procedure as in line dance and use the end of the move before to set up the next move and many times that is achieved at the end of a triple step. Remember, the basic technique to use is always positioning the center of the body in the direction of the next move and using prep steps to get the momentum to make the transitions seamlessly.

How to Become a Lousy Dancer

author unknown

1. Learn 100 turns and moves before perfecting the basics.
2. Dance with the same partner ALL the time.
3. NEVER attend a class or a workshop.
4. Never do any basic moves.
5. Don't bother to learn the basics well.
6. Be oblivious of your partner.
7. Forget that confidence and assurance come with knowledge and practice.
8. NEVER practice.
9. Dance your competition routines on the social dance floor.
10. Be sure to tell everyone how wonderful you are and that you have never taken a lesson in your life!

Basics of Communication

by Karen Tagunoff, NTA Country Director for Austria

“Communicare,” Latin = “share,” “do something together”

- “Said does not mean heard,
- Heard does not mean understood,
- Understood does not mean agreed”

For a successful communication sender and receiver are responsible in the same way.

Nonverbal and Para verbal Communication

The spoken word is not so important for human relations. We are mainly influenced by nonverbal (the “not-spoken”) and Para verbal (how something is spoken e.g. tempo, tone pitch, vibrations) communication.

A) Influences

Main non-verbal factors are:

- Look (dress, size, colour of hair or eyes,..)
- Smell (own and perfume)
- Mimic (facial expression, expression of eyes, mouth)
- Posture (head, hands, body)

Non-verbal signals may be understood in different cultures in a different way.

For example: “NO”

- Often = shake head or wave hand
- Greece= pull up the eyebrow
- Greece, Turkey, Arabic Countries= Pull head backwards
- Japan=flutter the hand

B) The First Impression

95% Non Verbal, these signals can hardly be controlled (sweating, ..)

Neurophysiologists found out that we decide within the first second of contact if we trust somebody or not.

Main Factors are:

- Dressing
- Posture
- Gesture
- Mimic expression
- Speed of speech
- Pitch of the voice
- Intonation
- Modulation (dialect)

(continued on next page column one)

Grundlagen Der Kommunikation

by Karen Tagunoff, NTA Country Director for Austria

“Communicare,” lat. “teilen,” “gemeinsam machen,” “mitteilen,” “teilnehmen”

- “Gesagt heißt nicht gehört.
- Gehört heißt nicht verstanden.
- Verstanden heißt nicht einverstanden.“

Für das Gelingen der Kommunikation tragen Sender und Empfänger in gleichem Maße die Verantwortung!

Nonverbale und paraverbale Kommunikation

Das gesprochene Wort spielt in der zwischenmenschlichen Kommunikation eine äußerst geringe Rolle. Vielmehr lassen wir uns sehr stark durch nonverbale (das nicht Gesprochene) und paraverbale (wie wird Sprache eingesetzt, zB Tempo, Tonhöhe, Tonhöhenverlauf, Schwingungen) Kommunikation beeinflussen.

A) Einflussgrößen

Folgende nonverbale Faktoren haben enormen Einfluss auf uns:

- Aussehen (Kleidung, Größe, Haarfarbe, Augenfarbe etc)
- Geruch (Eigengeruch, Parfüm)
- Mimik (Gesichtsausdruck, Augenausdruck, Mundform)
- Kopfhaltung (Blickkontakt, Neigung)
- Haltung und Bewegung der Hände (Gestik)
- Stand (Körper- und Beinhaltung, Bewegung)
- Sitzhaltung (Beinkreuzung)

Nonverbale Signale werden in unterschiedlichen Kulturräumen verschieden interpretiert. Nachstehend verschiedene Möglichkeiten ein “Nein” nonverbal auszudrücken.

NEIN

- Weit verbreitet = Kopf schütteln, mit der Hand abwinken
- Griechenland= Augenbraue hochziehen
- Griechenland, Türkei, arabische Länder= Kopf zurückwerfen
- Japan= Mit der Hand fächeln

B) Erster Eindruck

Der erste Eindruck setzt sich zu 95 % aus nonverbaler und nur zu ca. 3% aus verbaler Kommunikation zusammen. Nonverbale Signale sind kaum steuerbar (rote Flecken, Schwitzen ...).

Neuropsychologen haben herausgefunden, dass in der ersten Sekunde entschieden wird, ob jemand glaubhaft wirkt oder nicht.

(continued on next page column two)

C) Prejudice

“0,25 seconds are enough to judge somebody” (Der Spiegel, 1999)

- 10 % are based on WHAT a person says
- 90% are based on HOW it is said
- Even if a person is well known the influence of non-verbal signals is still 60%.

No misunderstanding happens, if verbal and nonverbal and para verbal communication fit together.

These basics of communication we should always keep in mind, when we start teaching (especially for a new group).

(<http://www.payer.de/kommkulturen/kultur042.htm#2.3.3>,

(<http://www.isl.uni-karlsruhe.de/publikationen/pfail/050103-nonverbal.html>, 09.11.05)

Faktoren, die beim ersten Eindruck eine große Rolle spielen:

- Kleidung
- Haltung
- Gestik
- Mimik
- Sprechgeschwindigkeit
- Stimmlage
- Betonung
- Modulation (Dialekt)

C) Vorurteile

“Eine Viertelsekunde reicht, und der Mensch hat sein Vorurteil über den Mitmenschen gefällt.“ (Der Spiegel, 1999)

- o 10 % hängen davon ab, was die Person sagt und
- o 90 % werden durch Mimik, Gestik, Haltung, Kleidung, Parfüm etc beeinflusst.
- Ist die Person bekannt beträgt der Bereich der nonverbalen Signale noch immer 60%

Keine Missverständnisse entstehen, wenn verbale, non-verbale und paraverbale Kommunikation übereinstimmen.

Diese Grundlagen sollten wir immer in Betracht ziehen, wenn wir eine (vorllem neue) Gruppe unterrichten.

(<http://www.payer.de/kommkulturen/kultur042.htm#2.3.3>,

(<http://www.isl.uni-karlsruhe.de/publikationen/pfail/050103-nonverbal.html>, 09.11.05)

Making Mistakes Is Natural

Give yourself the freedom to make mistakes; do not judge yourself (or others) on *errors* committed as a normal part of learning. The common attitude toward an *error* is that it is something bad, an abnormality, a deviation from the right path. Too often we attach emotional importance to our mistakes allowing them to adversely affect our self-esteem. We often misconstrue them as personal failures.

Making judgements (right or wrong, good or bad) engages the left brain functions that can obscure our sensory feedback. So a dancer or student makes a mistake! He is embarrassed. He makes the same mistake again. His emotional reactions to the initial mistake didn't allow him to recognize the reason for it, nor was he able to regain his composure and concentrate for a renewed attack. If we can manage to stop judging ourselves emotionally, we will be free to learn from mistakes and problems all people face.

We place arbitrary limitations on our student's performances so our students are afraid to make a mistake. They won't experiment and consequently they do not advance beyond what they are currently doing.

Without the contrived boundaries of performance, a learner feels encouraged to explore and experiment. He will eventually be able to select his own technique for a particular situation. He is also able to cope with his mistakes. This is a trial and error process in which the error is not a bad or punishable experience, but an information source. If you only know *one way* how can you be sure it is the right one? He tries. He fails. He tries again. He may fail again but now he will view his actions and try to correct them.

Tips to Help You Learn & Remember Dance Routines (Part 1)

Efi Smaragdakis, NTA Country Director for Italy

One of the common struggles students face in class is recalling the sequence of choreography. Particularly, if you are a beginning student, you may not have yet developed the tools needed to quickly retain passages of movement. Everyone is different and you will need to find what works for you. The following are just a few techniques you might try the next time your teacher gives a combination.

One of the most important skills for a new dancer is being able to learn the steps of dance routines. Not many people realize how much brain and memory ability is required for becoming a successful dancer. Not only must a dancer be able to execute several dance steps, he or she must also be able to remember the steps in a set order. The ability to learn dance routines quickly is usually a prerequisite for dance auditions. Directors and choreographers prefer dancers who are able to catch on fast. The following tips will help you learn how to quickly memorize dance routines.

Look for the Pattern

Choreography is not typically one, long, string of unrelated movements but when it is given more quickly than you are used to, it can seem so. Generally you will be shown a sequence more than once. If you're struggling to keep up with the rush of information coming your way, it may help to focus on the pattern first and worry about the movement second.

The pattern may relate to number of repetitions. For instance, 4 front, 4 side, 2 front, 2 back, 1 front, 1 side, 1 front, 1 back — it may seem an odd pattern, but if you've retained at least this, filling in the blanks will be easier. Patterns may also be directional. Perhaps the choreography travels to the down-stage corner, faces upstage, downstage, then moves stage right.

Focus on One Aspect of the Choreography

Pattern is just one element of choreography. You might also choose to focus on other components, one at a time, to construct the sequence in your body and mind. For example, try focusing your attention on the feet alone if combining the arms, head, and rhythms all at once is proving to be too much information. This doesn't mean you have to leave the other elements out altogether. Do what you can, but give yourself permission to let one thing go for the sake of absorbing the details of another. You can always layer the movements with more detail as you go.

Attach a Visual Image

Sometimes attaching a mental image to a step or series of steps can help you to put things in order. The movement's terminology will help for sure. However, sometimes movements don't have names or at least not ones that correspond to an image. So, it's okay to attach your own visuals and/or terminology . . . no matter how strange.

Write it Down

Sometimes the act of writing, or seeing words or sketches on a page can solidify a chain of movement, particularly if there will be some time before your next class or rehearsal. You might try writing down the choreography (in whatever way suits you) as soon as possible after your class. This is not a technique that works for everyone and I have seen students get too attached to their new "cheat sheet." The key is remembering that this device is capturing memories you have not creating memories where there are none. The choreography is already stored in your body, putting it on the page is just mental repetition.

Repetition

Speaking of repetition, there are lots of ways you might apply this prominent memory device. Though practicing "full-out" is most helpful, "marking" the movement can also be beneficial. Try marking as much as you can as the teacher demonstrates the combination or, whenever there are spare and appropriate moments during the class — while the first group performs, while the teacher is working independently with someone else, etc.

When there is a moment in the sequence that you trip or get stuck on each time it is performed. Try performing the movement prior, the problem spot, and the moment following, three or more times in a row. Then perform the whole thing again. You may find that this helps to correct the gap in memory you've been experiencing.

Also, never underestimate both mental (i.e. visualizing the choreography) and physical practice. This kind of repetition not only solidifies your memories but will bring to light the segments of the combination that seemed clear in class but are trouble spots in your memory.

Sing the Rhythm

Sometimes thinking of dance as a rhythm or melody can assist your recollection of the choreography. Your movement may already be set to music, however, the dance itself has a rhythm or phrasing. Try to focus on this and even "sing" it to yourself as you move or recall the movement. Many teachers do this when teaching the movement.

No matter what strategies you use to remember choreography . . . Don't Rely Too Much on Others

Many students will depend heavily on the teacher or other students when performing movement. I like to call this "brain-sucking" because when you do this you are leeching the movement sequence from someone else without actually retaining much of it in your own brain. The danger of this is that when that person is no longer performing the choreography or makes a mistake, you will be unable to perform accurately. When attempting the choreography after it has been given, try to keep your focus off of those around you—looking ahead or changing your focus as required in

the choreography. A little brain-sucking is normal, however, I find that most students don't need to do it as much as they think, which brings me to...

Trust Your Motor Memory

Your brain and body have an amazing capacity to “remember” movement patterns, pathways, and relationships. The mechanics and neuroscience of this is not completely understood. Like all skills, however, motor memory (some-

times referred to as muscle memory), seems to be learned and improved through practice and experience. As you are learning, it pays to trust these neuromuscular systems to do their work. Do not let lack of confidence or “overthinking” undermine the relatively natural process that your mind and body go through as you learn and practice choreography. Replace negative thoughts with positive and affirming ones.

Remembering the “Classic” Line Dances

by Rose Haven, NTA State Director for Georgia

Every so often line dancers who have been around from the time line dance competition and popularity was really beginning to grow (about 20+ years ago), will remember an older dance that was so much fun and wish they could dance it again. Or they may remember some of the older songs that really made you want to get up and dance to them.

To a line dance instructor, it is also sometimes evident that dancers who are new to the dance scene will see an older classic line dance being done and will express a desire to learn it. They may even try to pick it up on the fly on the dance floor, and sometimes the dance is just too difficult to pick up without some instruction/explanation of the unfamiliar dance steps.

Then thanks to the internet, there is no shortage of brand new line dances coming out constantly in countries all over the world. So what is an instructor to do?

How about teaching a mix of the older classics (dances that are still around occasionally seen on the dance floor) and the newer popular dances? Some line dance instructors do just that or even bring an old favorite song back with a new dance to fit it.

Remember the old song by Carlene Carter called *Every Little Thing*? The dance that existed to it years ago was fun, but did not really fit the phrasing of the music. In recent

years a newer contra line dance was introduced to that great song with two short tags (4 counts each) to make the dance fit the song very well (*Kickin' Back* 2013 by choreographer Scott Blevins). The song is full of energy and has a great dance beat, so it's being enjoyed by a generation of dancers who may not have previously been exposed to it when it was first released years ago, and being enjoyed again by the experienced dancers.

Many of the surveys that can be found online often list the favorite classics that are still being taught and danced to this day. And some of the older classic dances are occasionally put to newer modern songs by dance instructors. That enables dancers to still do favorite dances but to more current music.

And the wonderful thing about some of these older classic dances is that dancers who knew and enjoyed them years ago are happy to see them again and dance them again, if they have been out of dancing for awhile and had forgotten these favorites.

So look out for these “classics” when you see them on the dance floor—they just may be worth a revival to the original song or a current popular song (for the enjoyment of both new and experienced dancers alike)!

TEACHERS EVERYWHERE

**We all know the joy that our friends and students give each of us.
Let's make every effort to introduce as many people as we can to dancing
and do all we can to get them hooked as we are
to the nicest way to meet people and make friends
so they, too, can enjoy themselves the rest of their lives.**

Teachers Korner

by Kelly Gellette

Paddle Turns

What is a Paddle Turn?

- It is a series of steps taken in a circle around an axis.
- OR—One predominate weight change step on the center foot, the second foot paddles around it with partial weight changes.

What is the count?

It is 1&2&3&4 if you start on the center foot or &1&2&3& if you start on the side step.

What is the basic footwork?

- There are seven weight changes. The numbered count has **full weight changes**, the “&” counts **practical weight changes**, since they are taken on the ball of the foot.
- You **MUST** pick your feet up “slightly” on all of the numbered counts.
- The Paddle Turn is used in Samba (called Volta’s right & left), Soft Shoe, and forms of it in Swing. If this is the proper footwork in these other dance forms why do we have something different in Line Dance? In Line Dance there is a pattern called Forward Cross Triples which is a variation of the Paddle Turn. In some dance forms it is called Lame Ducks.

Paddle Turn Footwork

Starting on the left foot as the center foot. Lean into the turn.

- 1 Step forward on the left foot in 5th position, make a 1/4 turn left
- & Step side right on the ball of the foot in 2nd position
- 2 Replace weight on left foot in 5th position and make a 1/4 turn left
- & Step side right on the ball of the foot in 2nd position
- 3 Replace weight on the left foot in 5th position and make a 1/4 turn left
- & Step side right on the ball of the foot in 2nd position
- 4 Replace weight on left foot in 5th position and make a 1/4 turn left

Note: As mentioned before, the pattern may be started on the side step in which case the count would be &1&2&3&.

Push Turns

What is a Push Turn?

It is a Paddle Turn in which you **DO NOT** pick up the central foot. Use the side steps (on the ball of the foot) to push the body around the central foot.

Note: The Push Turn may also be **started** on the “&” count.

In Country Western Dance there has always been mixed feelings on these two turns. If you look in ballroom and soft shoe books syllabus it clearly explains it.

Note: A Step Turn is often called a Push Turn. This is incorrect as it uses CBM and is a 1/2 turn whereas a Push Turn revolves around the axis and is a full 360 degree turn.

Master Teaching

A Master Teacher is special. The word Master means how well they instruct, not how many contests they have won.

MASTER TEACHING AT WORK IS A THING OF BEAUTY. It is like watching a good pitcher work the ball, the strike zone, the count, and the batter: All at the same time. The Master Teacher takes advantage of so many elements of the teaching situation. THEY EMPHASIZE BASICS. The difference in Master Teaching is not so much WHAT they teach as HOW they teach! For Master Teaching there are a couple of different approaches.

The **FIRST** is controlled experience method. The instructor simply introduces his students to dance by starting with a simple step and doing it over and over again. There is no basic technique-ing. Little or no discussion. It is strictly experiential. Then the next movement is suggested using this foundation of success and confidence the student is asked to explore more demanding situations. They actually develop different tactics for varying situations. They expand their pool of technical options. How to get out of corners, or to get out of another dancers way, etc., etc.

The effectiveness of this method is founded in two elements, **FIRST** the instructor hand picks the situation, matching the student’s current skill level with the difficulty of the task. It must appear to the student as completely spontaneous. Most of the time they have no idea that the instructor has orchestrated anything. If the instructor is really skillful, they may not even be aware of what they have done.

SECOND. Do not alert the student to the possibility of failure or fear by giving advanced technical explanation. It is the same as saying “now we’re really going to try something tough!” After they are successful, then you tell them how difficult the patterns were. And tell them what a great accomplishment they’ve danced through. That’s when the instructor wants to be sure the student knows they’ve learned something new and they appreciate their monumental achievement.

The difference between Master Teaching and just average teaching is the Master knows how to teach, but also when to teach. They change our attitudes. They look at all teaching situations with a different perspective than other instructors. Two philosophical truths drive everything they do. **PEOPLE HAVE FUN.** The great teachers never lose sight of this goal, especially with students who are not naturally gifted. The Master Teachers use teaching methods that are very simple and have a 100% success rate. This is the bottom line difference between them and other instructors.

THE NEW REVISED 2014 Teachers Manual Volume I—ORDER FORM

After a great deal of time and effort the new revised 300 page 2014 Teachers Manual Volume I is ready for sale.

The first portion includes dance information important for all dancers—line, partner, and couples. The rest of the book will interest couple dancers with School Figures Level One and Level Two.

There is a brief history of social dance, floor alignment illustrations, partner alignment and technique, lead and follow suggestions, dance position illustrations, port de bras illustrations, teaching hints for couples, and many more interesting tips and suggestions for better dancing and teaching.

Prices are: USA \$50.00 Canada \$60.00 Foreign \$65.00
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The NEW REVISED Terminology Booklet is filled with MANY MORE of the most used terms plus four Appendix pages. NTA volunteers have worked hard to research and standardize proper dance terms for dances. While we respect a choreographers dance description sheets as they have prepared them, we also strive to explain to our students the proper names as well as the proper technique to these dance moves.

This Booklet will assist you in explaining both the proper names and the maybe more popular name. It doesn't cover every term we know but it includes a great amount of variety.

The cost is \$25.00 USD which includes handling and postage. To order please send this order form and your check (made payable to NTA) to NTA Business Office, P.O. Box 17217, Urbana, IL 61803-7217.

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To purchase the NEW REVISED NTA Dance Terminology Booklet in FRENCH
Please contact Christian & Nicole Hsu • e-mail: nicolehsu28@orange.fr

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